

Submitter: David Viers  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services  
Measure: SB569

Hello,

I am writing to provide testimony in support of the bill mandating Closed Captions be displayed on TVs in public settings.

To give a bit of history about myself: I have had a severe to profound hearing loss since my mid-30s (now 78 years old) and currently have bilateral cochlear implants. I was the founding President of what is now known as HLAA - Portland and HLAA-Oregon. These are respectively the local Portland chapter and the Oregon state association of the national Hearing Loss Association of America. I have been involved in both Deaf and Hard of Hearing issues and organizations for 40 years now, including the passage of the Closed Captioning ordinances for both Portland and Salem.

The current ordinance before the Oregon legislature is in keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act, passed well over 30 years ago. When persons with hearing loss are in public settings (e.g. restaurants, lounges, etc.), they often have great difficulty in being able to understand what is being said on televisions. In addition to regular programming, such as sporting events, this includes special announcements (e.g. a local inclement weather announcement or a mass shooting happening perhaps in the immediate vicinity). So, in addition to just being able to track what is happening in a football game, we are looking at areas where our safety may be at risk. Just as an additional point, even people who do not think they have hearing loss, often struggle to hear in noisy settings. This bill will benefit multitudes of people.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill and the positive effects it will have upon the lives of many.

Sincerely,

David S. Viers

PS - One additional point: I would suggest that this item be stricken from the proposed bill:

"(5) A place of public accommodation may temporarily deactivate closed captioning on a closed-captioned television receiver at the request of a person with a visual impairment."

A person's WANT should not supersede another's NEED.